

What is claimed is:

1. An elevator car with a refuge area structure for extending the refuge area, the elevator car comprising:
 - a top surface of the elevator car, the top surface having an opening; and
 - 5 a refuge area structure having a first panel foldably connected to the opening and a second panel foldably connected to the first panel, the structure having (i) a closed position in which the first and second panels are oriented coplanar within the opening in the top surface and fill the opening; and (ii) an open position in which the first panel is oriented downwardly into the interior of
 - 10 the elevator car and the second panel is oriented substantially horizontally within the interior of the car and vertically below the opening to form a work platform for supporting a worker.
2. The elevator car of claim 1, wherein the first panel and the second panel have a length substantially equal to the length of the opening in the top surface of the
- 15 elevator car, and the sum of the widths of the first and second panels is substantially equal to the width of the opening.
3. The elevator car of claim 1, wherein the first panel and second panel each have a width and length substantially equal to the width and length of the opening.
4. The elevator car of claim 1, wherein the width of the first panel is at least two feet.
- 20 5. The elevator car of claim 1, wherein the width of the second panel is at least two feet.
6. The elevator car of claim 1, wherein the length of the first panel is at least 2.7 feet.
7. The elevator car of claim 1, wherein the length of the second panel is at least 2.7
- 25 feet.
8. The elevator car of claim 1, wherein the second panel is oriented substantially vertically above opening in the top of the elevator car to form an escape hatch.

9. An elevator car with extended refuge area, the elevator car comprising:

a top surface of the elevator car, the top surface having an opening, the perimeter of the top surface surrounding the opening having a left side and a right side; and

a refuge area structure, the structure having a first hinge, a second hinge, a first panel, and a second panel, the first hinge coupled to the right side of the top surface perimeter, the first panel having a left side and a right side, the right side hingedly coupled to the first hinge, the second hinge coupled to the left side of the first panel, the second panel having a left side and a right side, the right side hingedly coupled to the second hinge.

10. The elevator car of claim 9, wherein the refuge area structure has a closed position and an open position, the closed position having the first and second panels oriented coplanar with the opening in the top surface and fill the opening, the open position having the first panel oriented downwardly into the interior of the elevator car and the second panel oriented substantially horizontally within the interior of the elevator car and vertically below the opening in the top surface to form a work platform for supporting a worker.

11. The elevator car of claim 9, wherein the distance between the left side and right side of the first panel is about two feet.

12. The elevator car of claim 9, wherein the distance between the left side and right side of the second panel is about two feet.

13. The elevator car of claim 9, wherein the left and right sides of the first panel and the left and right sides of the second panel are about 2.7 feet in length.

14. The elevator car of claim 9, wherein the second panel is oriented substantially vertically above the opening in the top of the elevator car to form an escape hatch.